

Best Practices in Undergraduate Academic Advising at DePauw

May 6, 2019

Below, the Advising Committee has provided a number of 'best practices' to consider while you engage in your vital faculty function as an advisor to students. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that faculty may differ in their points of emphasis, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, we acknowledge that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to advising. Nonetheless, we hope the practices below will prove helpful to you as you evolve as an advisor in the course of your career.

Advisor Responsibilities

Faculty and staff advisors have the responsibility to

- Provide accurate and timely information about degree and career-related requirements.
- Be available during publicized office hours.
- Respond to students' inquiries within 2 business days.
- Empower each student to make independent and informed decisions, and encourage resilience and growth mindset.
- Be knowledgeable about external policies and procedures, including FERPA, Title IX, and ADA, or know where to find that information.
- Serve as a guide, teacher, facilitator, and coach.
- Make appropriate referrals as needed.
- Advise from an integrated perspective of general education, major(s), minor(s), as well as experiential learning.

- Advise the whole student - keeping in mind that they have different developmental needs as they transition through the four-year path.
- Ensure smooth transition for students declaring and changing majors.
- Keep accurate and up-to-date advising records in SSC.
- Be resourceful, utilizing web-based resources, advising tools and professional development opportunities to become more proficient in advising.

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Best Practices: Advising In General

- Scheduling and preparation of advising appointments.
- Have dedicated advising hours; increase availability during peak advising times.
- Use the SSC advising campaign feature to automate scheduling.
- Schedule advising appointments to accommodate a variety of students' schedules in relation to the academic calendar.
- Update availability for advising appointments on SSC regularly.
- Send students reminders about when they need to schedule appointments and encourage them to see all their advisors.
- Meet with current students at least once per semester and stay in touch at least via email at key points in the semester for undeclared students.
- Require or encourage students to complete/update an academic plan including when they intend to take courses and bring it to appointments.

Time-to-Degree/Withdrawals/Repeats

- Steer students into courses for which they are prepared (e.g., have met prerequisite courses).

- Inform students about possible pitfalls of changing majors (e.g., time-to-degree; tuition, surcharge; financial implications).
- Discuss consequences of withdrawing (from a single course and/or the University) and repeating a course; help them to understand the consequences (e.g., time-to-degree; tuition surcharge; financial implications; unique consequences per college/department). Send emails regarding these topics as appropriate.
- Be proactive when students indicate they may intend to withdraw or transfer and notify the office responsible for monitoring withdrawals that the student has expressed interest so others may engage in outreach to the student.

General

- Use the four-year outline on the [Advising Quick Links](#) and upload a PDF copy to SSC each semester.
- Review and reference the [Advising Quick Links](#) and [Advising Guide](#) and review the best practice document for [recording advising sessions](#).
- Discuss unsatisfactory mid-term grade notifications, semester warning alerts, implications of academic probation, and refer to academic support resources (refer to the [Advising Guide](#)).
- Discuss undergraduate research opportunities, off-campus study, internships, and other forms of experiential learning.
- Encourage students to communicate with the Office of the Registrar to confirm appropriate progress towards degree requirements.
- Encourage engagement in the University and local community (e.g., clubs, student government, recreation, community service).
- Demonstrate that you care about the students' academic success.

- Communicate regularly with students through emails about appointments and appointment preparation (this can be automated through SSC).
- Utilize departmental worksheets for major and General Education requirements.
- Participate in advising workshops for faculty and staff.
- New advisors should join NACADA, the National Association for Academic Advising, and attend their regional conferences and webinars as possible.
- Seek an advisor mentor, a more experienced faculty/staff mentor, in your department that you can go to with advising questions or concerns.
- Utilize developmental advising practices (refer to [Advising Guide](#)).
- Evaluate your advising and make improvements by seeking students' input through appointment evaluations.

Best Practices: Advising Undeclared Students

- Adhere to the previous section “Best Practices: Advising in General.”
- Review TR/AP credit to ensure students have not repeated credit for equivalent coursework they are transferring in either as a freshman or transfer.
- Educate students about course scheduling (e.g. process, timeline, sequencing).
- Discuss course load (number of courses; type of courses), sequencing, and implications. Note: students on probation should not necessarily take fewer courses.
- Discuss “Major fit” in relation to skills, interests and abilities.
- Discuss decision-making process in relation to major and career exploration, and make appropriate referrals to facilitate students' decision-making process.

- Discuss students' responsibilities in advising such as reading emails, reviewing Advising Transcript, and selecting course options from the Schedule of Classes.

Best Practices: Advising Students who have Declared Majors or Degree Programs

- Clarify degree requirements as outlined in Departmental or Degree Worksheets.
- Adhere to the previous section "Best Practices: Advising in General."
- Review entire transcript to ensure students have not repeated credit for equivalent coursework. This includes courses repeated at DePauw and TR/AP credit (together with OCS courses).
- Continue to discuss "Major fit" in relation to skills, interests and abilities.
- Continue to make appropriate referrals in relation to career exploration and career development to the Hubbard Center.
- Assess advisee's progress toward degree each semester.
- Have students leave advising appointment with a plan to enroll in the exact courses needed to graduate.
- Encourage students to consider additional Extended Studies courses, Summer School, or Internships as a method for staying on track.
- Conduct major certification prior to the beginning of a student's final semester.
- Discuss plans after graduation.